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EPA Laboratory To Be Powered By Wind, Sun

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MANCHESTER (AP) The Environmental Protection Agency is going green at its regional laboratory, soon to be the first federal facility in the Northwest powered entirely by the sun and the wind.

EPA officials dedicated the new solar panels at the South Kitsap lab Wednesday, toasting the nation's energy future with coffee produced by electricity the solar cells generated.

The lab's \$20,000 solar array can power an energy-efficient home, but the lab needs more electricity and will rely mostly on wind power generated in Eastern Oregon and placed on the regional electrical grid.

The net effect in reducing emissions will be the same as if the wind power were produced in South Kitsap, said Romulo Diaz Jr., assistant EPA administrator.

The project will reduce emissions by about 1,300 tons of carbon dioxide each year roughly the amount produced by 260 cars, officials estimate.

At today's costs, neither solar nor wind power is as cheap as the electricity people can buy from utilities using more traditional sources. But as "green" energy becomes more common, generating costs will come down, said Mike Nelson of Washington State University's Cooperative Extension Energy Program.

Just as personal computers allow more people to play the stock market, he said, solar power and other small generators will eventually allow people to "play the power market."

A state law going into effect June 15 will allow people to sell power to the grid at prevailing prices.

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